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Perceptions of Work Ethic Among College Seniors.

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PERCEPTIONS OF WORK ETHIC AMONG COLLEGE SENIORS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Resource Education
and
Workforce Development

by

Patricia Nolen Pierson

B. S. Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 1977
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ABSTRACT

Orientation and attitudes toward work are important issues in the workforce where fierce global competition and demands for increased productivity threaten virtually every business and industry. Managers and executives perceive an erosion of work ethic by America's young people and claim that today's college students have no realistic concept of "a day's work for a day's pay".

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine the perceptions of work ethic among university seniors and further, to determine if differences in work ethic exist based on the variables gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, age, planned occupation, current employment status, and length of employment. The total number of graduating seniors analyzed as part of the study was 274.

Descriptive statistics found that mean scores from responses of these students for three subscales on the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI) were higher than were mean scores for other respondents found in the literature. An independent samples t-test found no significant differences in work ethic based on gender. A one-way analysis of variance also found no significant

difference in work ethic perceptions relative to ethnicity, marital status, number of children, age, planned occupation, current employment status, and length of employment. Recommendations and implications for further research and study were given.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Work ethic in the U.S. has been traditionally viewed as one of the core values that helped build our nation's greatness. If this value falls, what next? Will other core values take the same path and will we become a nation known for laziness, inactivity, decreased work performance, and absenteeism?

Many researchers fear that college students have no realistic concept of the term "a day's work for a day's pay" (National Center for Higher Education Management, 1998). Sheehy (1990) found college students to have poor work habits, a lack of sensitivity to business needs, and unrealistic expectations about skills they need to be successful in the workplace. Managers and executives perceive an erosion of the work ethic, a widely reported decline in the value and importance of work as evidenced by the behaviors and attitudes of this young generation (Siegel, 1983; Yankelovich, 1981).

Generation Xers" have been accused by the "Baby Boomers" of having no work ethic (Filipczak, 1994). The term "baby boomers" is commonly attributed to those

individuals born between 1946 and 1964 and "generation Xers" are those individuals born between 1965 and 1980 (Goldsmith, 2000). These "Xers" are the "next generation" of employees. If the accusations are true, a downturn in productivity could have serious and damaging effects in every facet of industry, education, and society as a whole.

Wiener and Vardi (1980) and Veblen (1994) found that the level of one's work commitment could predict performance, absenteeism, and tardiness. In light of this public perception of a decreased work ethic in our young people, this topic becomes extremely important and worthy of study. Gini (1998a) explains it this way. "As adults there is nothing that more preoccupies our lives. From the approximate ages of 21-70 we will spend our lives working" (p. 707). Yet, because it plays such a large part in our lives, we take for granted its importance and significance. Pope John Paul II (1982) perhaps expressed it best. "Work is a good thing for man—a good thing for his humanity because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed in a sense becomes more a human being" (p. 112).

Gini (1998a) further explains that it is in work that we become persons. It is work that forms us, gives us a focus, and a vehicle for personal expression and definition. Clearly, since work consumes such a monumental portion of each of our lives, shouldn't attitudes and values regarding it be studied? Promoting the work ethic is one of the goals of vocational education. Therefore, it seems reasonable that examining how university seniors, the next generation of workers, perceive their own work ethic, is a most relevant area of vocational education research.

But how does one define work ethic? Work ethic has been described in a variety of ways. First, it has been termed as a belief in the importance of hard work as a basic value. Specifically, the definition has been derived from Max Weber (1904, 1905). He developed a philosophy of "diligence, thrift, sobriety, and prudence", resulting in what is now known as the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) (Tawny, 1958, p.3). Further, Miller and Coady (1984) have defined an enabling work ethic as an "integrated and interactive system of attitudes, values, and beliefs that empower an individual to adapt to and initiate change in order to

sustain long-term harmony with his or her work environment" (p. 6).

Based on these definitions, what characteristics can be considered in describing what constitutes one's own work ethic? Researchers in recent studies have included the following characteristics: responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty (Ford & Herren, 1995) in describing work ethic. Others have grouped these into terms labeled personal image, interpersonal skills, and good habits and attitudes (Lankard, 1990). Collectively these and other related characteristics have been called "employability skills" and are the concrete, measurable expression of one's underlying work ethic (Hill & Petty, 1995, p.60).

While defining work ethic is not always an easy or simple task, employers have a valid concern regarding hiring employees who possess characteristics of strong work ethic. Ford and Herren (1995) denote a commonly held perception by employers in business and industry across the United States that the work ethic of employees has greatly deteriorated. Industry has indicated that personal and social competencies, both

components of work ethic, are sorely lacking in the college graduates they employ.

Employers have ranked work ethic as one of the attributes they most want in new hires, but one they say is often hard to find. Employers value dependability, initiative, and interpersonal skills in the people they hire, but say that locating workers that are reliable, drug-free, motivated, and possessing strong work ethic is difficult (Hill & Petty, 1995).

Hill and Petty (1995) also found that from a global perspective, employers in the U. S. have compared workers in this country with competition abroad and many feel that American employees are less productive than their international counterparts. Work ethic and employability skills are critical elements in being successful in the global marketplace.

So how do employees feel about their individual work ethic? It has been said that job success in new employees is determined more by the attitude of the worker than by occupational training (Cherrington, 1980; Naisbett & Aburdene, 1990; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). Employees' attitudes may be reflective of the number of hours they spend on the job. Statistics indicate that employees are working more than ever.

Americans work 140 more hours per year than did workers 20 years ago (Reynolds, 1992). Technology has allowed employees to work more efficiently and more productively, so that in actuality, work ethic may have increased, not decreased. However, many workers do report that there is a lessened sense of job satisfaction than workers felt in the past (Weaver, 1997). This is not surprising when statistics tell us that U.S. workers spend more time with each other than they spend with their families (Goodes, 1997).

Since nearly 50% of the workforce is made up of women, any discussion of employees' perceptions of work ethic must look at gender differences. Petty and Hill (1994) found that women tend to have a higher work ethic as well as different expectations from work than do men. These findings were consistent with the study done by Lyson (1984). Conversely, Abu-Saad and Isralowitz (1997) found no significant work ethic differences relative to gender among university students in Israel. Likewise, Rowe and Snizek (1995) found a noticeable lack of gender differences in work ethic. These conflicting results regarding gender and work ethic are extremely interesting and merit further study. Knowing how men and women perceive work helps form the foundation for

professional work orientation for these individuals (Petty & Hill, 1994).

Problem Statement

There exists in society a perception that today's young people do not know the meaning of the term "a day's work for a day's pay" (National Center, 1998). Employers feel that graduating seniors, this country's next generation of workers, have a decreased work ethic and that they will bring that weakened value into the workforce. Many employers fear that this will result in decreased productivity in the workplace and lack of global competition that could ultimately have a negative impact on other aspects of American life. This study sought to examine graduating seniors' self-perceptions toward the occupational work ethic and to make several comparisons based on data collected.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe university seniors at one university demographically according to gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, age range, current employment status, and length of employment.

2. Determine perceptions of college seniors at one university regarding their own occupational work ethic as measured by the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory © (OWEI) (Petty, 1993). This instrument is a measure of one's self-expressed work habits, attitudes and values. The 50 items or descriptors contained in the inventory represent essential work ethic concepts and attitudes developed from previous research by Hatcher (1995), Petty and Hill (1994), and Petty (1995a).
3. Determine if differences exist in occupational work ethic perceptions on the OWEI based on the following selected demographic variables:
 - a. gender
 - b. ethnicity
 - c. marital status
 - d. number of children
 - e. planned occupation
 - f. age
 - g. current employment status
 - h. length of employment

Significance of the Study

Results from this study can provide data as to the attitudes and orientation toward work of one group of

graduates entering the workforce. Findings can assist both educators and employers in determining methods of educational programming regarding work ethic and career choices based on any differences by gender, age, planned occupation, and employment status found to exist (Petty & Hill, 1994). Petty and Campbell (1988) found that "despite its importance for job survival, the issue of work attitudes often is overlooked or ignored by teachers because of the non-specific nature of the subject or the lack of direction from textbooks and published curriculum materials" (p. 56). Although efforts in education have been made to address this problem on some level, more work ethic research must be done if educational institutions are going to develop ways to cultivate a strong sense of work ethic in their graduates. For educators to properly train students for successful jobs in the new millennium, it is imperative to examine the current work ethic perceptions held by college seniors. Based on results of this research, educators should develop and implement curriculum aimed at integrating work ethic study into all vocational programs (Hill, 1996).

Application of this important educational research is significant in developing graduates who will be

successful in life. Technological changes and downsizing in today's job markets demand that educators help students develop a strong work ethic, characterized by teamwork skills, troubleshooting, decision-making, understanding of organizational culture, flexibility towards change, and lifelong learning attitudes. The world is an extremely competitive place and those who not only know the importance of work ethic, but who can also implement those skills associated with it, will be the winners in tomorrow's workplace (McEwen, 1997). Tom Ehrlich (2000) put it well when he stated:

The goal of higher education should not be a database of facts, but the competence to act in the world and the judgment to do so wisely. A full account of competence, including occupational competence, must include consideration of judgment, the appreciation of the ends as well as the means, and the broad implications and consequences of one's actions and choices. Education is not complete until students not only have acquired knowledge, but can act on that knowledge in the world, so the scope of learning outcomes must include these value-based aspects of competence, broadly defined.

Work ethic is an essential element of moral and civic responsibility and Ehrlich further asks, "What contribution can higher education make in developing these qualities in sustained and effective ways" (p.8)? He feels that a network of scholars is needed in assessment and research concerning undergraduate moral

and civic education, which incorporates the concept of work ethic.

Definition of Terms

Work ethic-- a desire to work hard and effectively for the sake of work itself (Yankelovich & Immerwahl, 1984). The role and acceptance of work in life (Fassel, 1990). An attitude or value toward the concept of work. Values are derived from needs and are more general than interests (Super, 1973).

Perceptions of work ethic-- one's attitudes regarding their own self-assessed work ethic.

The Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI)--a survey instrument that is a measure of self-expressed work habits, attitudes, and values in the workplace (Petty, 1993). Three sub-scale scores are produced from responding to the 50 items on the anchored scale. Those scales are interpersonal, initiative, and being dependable.

College seniors--undergraduate students who had achieved senior status by accumulating at least 92 credit hours toward their degree program at the time they made application for graduation.

Planned Occupation--choices for planned occupation in this study included the following: Service (waitress,

construction worker, cashier); Sales (insurance, sales in department store); Business (executive, management); Professional (teacher, lawyer, accountant); Medical profession (nurse, doctor, dentist); Full-time homemaker.

Age--the age range for this study were as follows: 24 or below; 25-44; 45-64; and 65 or older.

Current Employment Status--categories consisted of: not currently employed; employed 1-10 hours per week; employed 11-20 hours per week; employed more than 20 hours per week.

Length of Employment--categories consisted of: less than 1 year; 1-2 years; 3-4 years; more than 4 years.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to seniors applying for graduation during one semester at Northwestern State University of Louisiana who chose to complete the inventory. The boundaries of the study were set to control costs and practicality based on the accessible population. The study was also limited to describing the work ethic of college seniors at one university and to comparisons of work ethic scores relative to gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, age, current employment status, and

length of employment. Therefore, this study's generalizability is somewhat limited due to the small scope of the research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of related literature has seven parts:

(1) definition and history of work ethic, (2) employers' perceptions of employees' work ethic, (3) employees' perception of their own work ethic, (4) gender differences relative to work ethic perceptions, (5) age differences and work ethic, (6) occupation and work ethic, and (7) students' self-perceptions of work ethic (values, attitudes).

Definition and History of Work Ethic

The definition of the term "work ethic" has evolved over time, having had an interesting history. Coming originally from the work of Max Weber (1904, 1905), work ethic was regarded as a belief in hard work for its intrinsic value. It was a cultural norm that promoted being accountable and responsible for the quality and quantity of work performed (Cherrington, 1980; Colson & Eckerd, 1991; Quinn, 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). According to Barbash (1983):

The work ethic has no fixed definition, but the following key ideas and meanings suggest the ways the concept is used: (1) work as an end in itself which is expected to be rewarded eventually with material success; key meanings under this head include the centrality of work, the dignity of work however menial, work as a calling; (2) pride in

good quality workmanship, hard work, " an instinct of workmanship," satisfaction in work; and (3) adherence to the discipline of work; punctuality, obedience, diligence, industriousness. (McCracken & Falcon-Emmanuelli, 1994) p. 5.

In Biblical times, work was seen as punishment, due to the sin Adam and Eve committed in the Garden of Eden. After they sinned, God told Adam and Eve that from that day forward, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19, Holy Bible, New International Version, 1973). This set the precedent for the negative connotation associated with work.

The Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans all held hard work in low esteem. Aristotle and Plato philosophized that elite men should engage in exercises of the mind, while slaves did the common labor (Hill, 1998). The Romans borrowed their views from the Greek cultures, so they held a disdain for manual labor as well (Lipset, 1990). However, the Romans showed great industry by organization, administration, building, and warfare (Hill, 1998).

Later, during medieval times, although work was still perceived in negative terms, the positive factor whereby one could earn money to avoid relying on charity

gained some respect. The influence of the Christian church led those with wealth to give to the poor and less fortunate. However, work still held no intrinsic value. Its primary role was to meet the physical needs of the family, home, and community, and avoid idleness, which could lead to sin (Tilgher, 1930).

The Reformation gave birth to new ideas regarding work. Martin Luther and John Calvin, major religious leaders of the period, both believed that through work, one served God. It was the will of God and man's duty to choose a vocation, and then to work fervently to achieve all he could in that occupation (Hill, 1998).

This new attitude toward work differed significantly from prior thought and was termed the "Protestant Ethic" (Weber, 1904, 1905, trans.1958). The Protestant ethic, which gave "moral sanction to profit-making though hard work, organization and national calculation" (Yankelovich, 1981, p. 247) spread from Europe to Protestant America.

American writers like Benjamin Franklin wrote about diligence in work, efficient use of time, and delay of gratification (Hill, 1998). Early settlers to America viewed this country as a wilderness, partly because they sought spiritual freedom and compared themselves with

coming through the wilderness, as in the Bible, and hard work and determination were required to build a new world (Rodgers, 1978).

With the Industrial Revolution came the attitude of economic consciousness. If people failed to work hard, poverty and decay would affect the country (Rodgers, 1978). Schools taught that idleness was not good (Gilbert, 1977). By the early 1800's, the Industrial Age was in full swing. America shifted away from an agricultural society to one of mass production by factories located in cities (Hill, 1998). As machines took over many tasks, workers grew more skeptical of the promise of economic reward and prosperity through work. Now that factories could produce more goods than the nation needed, hard work was not viewed as a prerequisite for prosperity. The development of scientific management in industries in the early 1900's made apparent strong work ethic attitudes by employees, motivated by factors other than pay (Daft & Steers, 1986).

After World War II, more attention was given to human relations in management. By the late 1950's and 1960's, job enrichment and participatory styles of management were developed which paved the way for work

ethic to be an important factor in the workplace (Jaggi, 1988). After the war, women began entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers (Hill, 1998). The 1970's brought about the first initial interest and concern that work ethic in America may be changing. Bell (1976) argued that Americans had become hedonistic—not concerned with work and achievement, but how to spend and enjoy. During this same time, still other articles were written indicating that young people were turning away from their parents' commitment to work for success and were seeking personal reward in terms other than money (Gooding, 1972; Sheppard & Herrick, 1972; Special Task Force, 1973;).

Clyde Kluckhohn (1958) had done an extensive survey in 1957, which supported evidence that these values may have been shifting before the 1970's. In his survey he discovered that the Protestant work ethic was on the decline (Buchholz, 1998).

The Information Age of the 1980's and 1990's has created a kind of transformation regarding work for its own sake. With many technical jobs, came the ability for self-expression, as well as the need for considerable decision-making on the part of workers (Miller, 1986). Hill (1996) noted that "as new

technologies have empowered workers to be more productive than ever before, many of these same technologies have increased the discretion people must exercise in the use of their time and use of company resources. As these issues have been recognized, the importance of work ethic has been pushed to the forefront as a vital attribute for successful workers" (p.14). This focus has brought about satisfaction from work and is in sharp contrast to the Protestant ethic throughout history that saw work as pain, sacrifice, punishment, and postponed gratification (Yankelovich & Harmon, 1988).

It should be noted that although termed "Protestant" work ethic, research indicates that in fact, most world religions share common work-related beliefs. Buddha encouraged men to put forth their best effort and singled out laziness as men's and nation's downfall and Confucian teachings advocated duty, self-control, and conformity. There appears to be a close connection between many religions and the centrality of attitude toward work (Niles, 1999).

Although world history has influenced how attitudes of work ethic are perceived, there are currently many other factors affecting one's attitude toward work. It

is interesting to note that through time, attitudes regarding work ethic have changed so dramatically.

Employers' Perceptions Regarding Work Ethic of Employees

In the global marketplace, employers want employees who are going to work hard and take pride in doing a good job. Employers are looking for individuals who possess presentable personal images, interpersonal skills, good attitudes, and strong work habits-what Lankard (1990) called employability skills (Custer & Claiborne, 1992). However, some reports have indicated that those traits may be difficult to find in employees. Smith, Jones, and Lane (1997) reported that "employers are disenchanted with the level of skills possessed by individuals hired to fill vacancies in the workforce" (p.11). Hill and Petty (1995) found that 5 years after programs were put into place to address these problems, employers still said the workforce was not dependable.

Many in management positions are "Baby Boomers" who grew up in the 1950's and 1960's. These baby boomers accused "Generation X'ers" of having low or no work ethic (Filipczak, 1994). Perhaps employers' standards and sensitivities have also changed. A survey of Fortune 1000 Executives (Belton, 1995) found that

organizations are shifting from taking care of employees to expecting more from them (Karl & Sutton, 1998).

A newspaper article ("Study Says," 1999) cited a study of 308 businesses conducted by a University of Massachusetts marketing professor commissioned by the Greater New Bedford Regional Employment Board. Results of the study found that "business owners and human resource directors perceive the existing workforce to be unmotivated. They cite 'work ethic' as the most common problem with workers" (p. 10).

Sheehy (1990) found college workers to have poor habits regarding work, a lack of sensitivity to the needs of business, and expectations that are unrealistic about the attributes needed for workplace success. Hill (1996) reported that employers have observed that new hires fresh out of college appear to be there only to collect the paycheck, with no loyalty to the company or real interest in getting involved in the goals and strategic planning for the company's future. He concluded that if new college graduates who enter the working world do not understand and appreciate the significance of work ethic and the expectations of employers, outcomes will be less than harmonious.

Barbash (1983) recommended that work ethic perceptions are enhanced by organizing the employer-employee relationship as a reciprocal one, between the work ethic precept on one hand, and a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work" on the other. If there is no reward for a strong work ethic in our society, it has little meaning and incentive is lost.

Employees and Work Ethic

So how do employees view their own work ethic? To answer this question, one must first look at the influences that shape these attitudes. As is true with most cultural norms, one's belief in the work ethic is influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence. Through interaction with family, peers, and significant others, a person "learns to place a value on work behavior as others approach him in situations demanding increasing responsibility for productivity" (Braude, 1975, p. 134).

Children also learn by example. Parents who demonstrate a strong work ethic usually impart those same feelings to their children (Hill, 1997). One other way that work attitudes are shaped is by the socialization that occurs on the job. The culture of the environment in which an individual works, plays an

important part in molding each person's system of beliefs (Hill, 1997). In recent years, downsizing has become a frightening reality in the workplace. Social critic Ralph Nader (1996) argues that the "work ethic" is maintained by fear of reprisals and lack of options, rather than by loyalty or basic gratitude (Gini, 1998b).

Another influence on the work ethic of the individual is the school. Schools seek to foster the understanding of cultural norms. One goal of vocational education is to promote the work ethic (Miller, 1985; Gregson, 1991). Pyszkowski (1992) feels that students must be taught skills associated with a strong work ethic to meet the demands of the workplace.

Thus, many influences shape employees' attitudes toward work. Still, there are mixed findings as to how employees perceive work ethic.

Reynolds (1992) reported that employees are working more than ever. Technology was supposed to allow workers to have more leisure time, but evidence appears to contradict this. Reynolds further found that the average American is working longer hours now than did workers 20 years ago. The average American worker spends approximately 50 hours per week on the job. Middle and upper management work 58-65 hours per week. Eighty-nine

percent of Americans take work home on a regular basis. Sixty-five percent of Americans work more than one weekend a month. By the year 2010, at this pace, the projected average workweek will be 58 hours (Gini, 1998b). This would support an increased work ethic, not a decreased one. Lasch (1978) argues that employee work ethic has been transformed into a kind of personal survival. This culture lives for the present, because it is skeptical about the future. There appears to be extremely conflicting reports regarding employees and work ethic attitudes.

Gender Differences Regarding Work Ethic

World War II most notably marked women's entry into the workforce. As men went to war, women took to factories to produce items needed to support the war effort. The role of women in the workforce is one that has never been relinquished since then, and in fact, continues to expand at an amazing rate. By 1947, 25% of the workforce were women (Levitan & Johnson, 1983). By 1980, 42.5% of U.S. workers were women (Stencel, 1981). Naisbitt & Abundene (1990) reported that women workers in 1990 approached 50%. These figures continue to rise. Due to these significant demographic changes, it is extremely important to look specifically at women's

attitudes relating to work ethic and make gender comparisons about these attitudes toward work.

Lyson (1984) reported that women were inclined to seek job opportunities that allowed them to be creative, original, helpful to others, and to work with people. Bridges (1989) found that women sought personal beliefs like enjoyment, pride, personal challenges, and fulfillment from their work. Males, on the other hand, tended to look to extrinsic rewards in their work such as good pay, security and prestige (Addrisani & Miljus, 1977). However, others have found that such gender differences appear to have diminished in recent years with removal of barriers toward traditionally "female" or "male" occupations (Beutell & Brenner, 1986; Walker, Tansky, and Oliver, 1982). Petty and Hill (1994) reported that in one study female workers rated themselves as having a higher work ethic than did male workers. McCracken and Falcon-Emannuelli (1994) also found that the perceptions of men and women regarding work ethic were different. Educational situations where the instructor and student are of different sexes shed an interesting perspective on how work ethic is perceived. In this case, it becomes extremely important for the instructor to have an understanding of the

perceptions of their students to assist them in vocational preparation (Petty & Hill, 1994). The more knowledge an educator has of work ethic perception differences which exist by gender, he or she can more appropriately give vocational advice, especially regarding students pursuing occupations previously dominated by the opposite gender. Conversely, a study of gender as a determinant of work values among university students in Israel did not consistently support the traditional Western theory regarding gender-based work-value differences (Abu-Saad & Isralowitz, 1997). One study (Kaldenberg, Becker, & Zvonkovic, 1997) among male and female dentists regarding work and commitment, found that only subtle gender differences existed in the commitment process. Productivity and ownership were more related to commitment of men, and having friends at the workplace was more related to the commitment of women.

In a study by Hill (1997) results showed that men and women differed in their attitudes toward work. Women's scores on the attributes interpersonal skills, initiative, and being dependable were significantly higher than scores for males on those same characteristics. In light of the literature on the

glass ceiling and equal pay for equal work, further study in this area is needed.

Age Differences and Work Ethic

Does perception of work ethic change with age? Studies have revealed mixed results. Deans (1972) indicated that younger workers viewed work differently than older workers, finding that younger workers were less accepting of the concept of hard work as a virtue and a duty and not having as much faith in the belief that hard work would pay off. This was in sharp contrast to how their parents and grandparents had felt about the concept of hard work. Petty (1995a) also found that work ethic differed according to age. Adults aged 36-55 experienced higher levels of ambition than did adults from other age groups. In addition, this study found this age group to be "less apathetic, more conscientious, enthusiastic, hard working, independent, initiating, persevering, persistent, and resourceful, and less irresponsible and negligent" (p. 138). Hill (1997) indicated that very little difference was detected in the work ethic attributes for workers grouped by age. Wentworth & Chell (1997) reported that work experience negatively affects work ethic

perceptions, indicating that older workers have weaker attitudes about work.

Jurkiewicz (2000) reported that the work-related differences and similarities of Generation X'ers and Baby Boomers revealed more similarities than differences across the age span, contrary to other literature and stereotypes on generational differences.

Occupation and Work Ethic

Does the type of job or planned occupation affect work ethic attitudes? Occupational choice is not a value in and of itself, but is made on the basis of values (Rosenberg, 1957). McCracken and Falcon-Emmanuelli (1994), expressed that:

"When people choose occupations, they think there is something good about them, and this conception of the 'good' is part of an internalized mental structure which establishes priorities regarding what is wanted out of life. It is, therefore, indispensable to an adequate understanding of the occupational decision-making process to consider what people want or consider good or desirable, for these are the essential criteria by which choices are made" (p.9).

Weaver (1997) looked at work-related attitudes across time in seven years of General Social Surveys from 1972 through 1978 and four surveys from 1988 through 1993. Weaver found that not only had the work ethic not decreased for this period across occupations,

there was evidence that the work ethic had become stronger. The study revealed that people wanted to work harder and more efficiently. The only factor that appeared to decline was job satisfaction.

Petty (1995b) indicated that self-rated perception of work ethic did differ by occupations. Recognizing any differences that exist relative to occupation can provide important information in the training of employees in the work force.

Students' Perceptions of Work Ethic

Hill's (1996) research focused on secondary student perceptions regarding work ethic. His study concluded that vocational high school students scored significantly lower on the work ethic perception of initiative and dependability than did employed workers. Hurt and Holen (1976) and Kapes and Strickler (1975) indicated that work values appear to have a good deal of stability throughout the adolescent years, with strong values getting stronger and weak values becoming weaker, and finally stabilizing by late adolescence. A Reliastar Survey (1994) revealed that a poor work ethic was one of five top personal characteristics most often mentioned by human resource and customer service

managers as the greatest inadequacies in entry-level job applicants right out of high school.

Relative to college students, another study (Wentworth & Chell, 1997) found that American College students scored high in possessing a strong work ethic and that their work ethic scores decreased as age increased. Research involving adolescents in Sweden found intrinsic work goals to be strong (Hagstrom & Gamberale, 1995). McEwen (1997) recommended that "instructors should teach students the importance of loyalty, dedication, and a strong work ethic. They are often the driving force for professionals who are willing to make the extra effort to build successful careers" (p. 45). Durning (1992) suggests that Generation X is looking for a deep nonmaterial source of fulfillment that is the determinant of happiness—things like meaningful work, family, social relationships, and leisure.

Summary of Related Literature

Suggestions for further research have included study of work ethic perceptions by differing populations and more research of gender comparison regarding the occupational work ethic. With more than half of the workforce made up of women, it is important for

educators to understand their unique differences and perceptions. Petty and Hill (1994) felt so strongly about this, they concluded that any study of work ethic "must" look at gender (p.16).

Petty (1995b) suggested looking at the demographic variable "age" concerning attitudes of work ethic. As more and more "baby boomers" enter retraining programs and seek further education, educators must address unique needs of these adult learners, understand their high level of ambition, and recognize their desire for self-fulfillment.

Petty (1995b) also felt that the variable "planned occupation" requires study to see if patterns exist regarding work ethic by vocation. Knowledge of any differences found to exist would assist trainers in addressing that issue, as well.

Finally, many students are working simultaneously while attending college. In light of this growing trend, the researcher feels that further investigation is warranted to explore possible comparisons between current employment status and work ethic perceptions among college seniors.

Hill (1997) concluded that the extent to which factors such as gender, age, occupation, and work

experience appear to influence work ethic and attitudes is valuable information in increasing the understanding of workplace dynamics. Hill (1997) expressed it this way:

With the increasing diversity of the student population now participating in workforce preparation programs, whether retraining displaced workers or preparing learners for initial entry into the workplace, awareness of the potential attitudinal differences among participants with different demographic profiles would also increase an instructor's ability to provide effective guidance and instruction (pp.5-6).

In reviewing the literature, the variables gender, age, planned occupation, and work experience or length of employment relative to work ethic had been studied. After a thorough review of the literature, no related literature regarding the variables ethnicity, marital status, number of children, and current employment status could be found but were included as exploratory variables to determine if these particular variables could have effects on results.

According to Hill and Petty, (1995) the number one job skill needed in industry is work ethic. If this is true, it seems reasonable that there is a tremendous need to focus curriculum efforts in both secondary and post secondary schools on the importance of developing a strong work ethic, helping prepare graduates for

tomorrow's workforce. Hill (1996) suggested using the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI) factors---- interpersonal skills, initiative, and being dependable in further research, as these factors present a distinct set of terms to focus discussion of work ethic.

Although many characteristics comprising one's work ethic are related to personality and character, educators who make students aware of the importance of developing good interpersonal skills, strong initiative, and dependability skills are meeting stated goals of the profession. McCracken and Falcon-Emmanuelli (1994) explained it by saying:

In the United States, schools have been somewhat reluctant to specify values as objectives. There is concern that students should be free to select and possess whatever values they desire. This is not the case in many other cultures. For example, in Malaysia the school system has specified 24 values. It is the objective of the curriculum to develop these values in all students in the country. The extent to which values can be influenced by the curriculum is an area of needed research. (p. 7)

Research findings regarding work ethic will help educators and trainers to develop and plan curriculums designed to promote work ethic. In so doing, educators contribute to the workforce and society by training young people to be successful, productive workers in the 21st century.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Method of Procedure

The study was a survey research design and sought to determine the perceptions of college seniors regarding self-assessed work ethic attitudes and to compare those attitude scores by gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, age, current employment status and length of employment.

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the seniors demographically based on gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, age, planned occupation, current employment status and length of employment;
2. Determine perceptions of college seniors at one university regarding their own occupational work ethic as measured by the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory ©(OWEI) (Petty, 1993);
3. Determine if differences exist in occupational work ethic perceptions as measured by the OWEI based on the following selected demographic variables:
 - a. gender

- b. ethnicity
- c. marital status
- d. number of children
- e. planned occupation
- f. age
- g. current employment status
- h. length of employment

Selection of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI), developed by Dr. Gregory C. Petty of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Petty developed the instrument using methods similar to those of Kazanas (1978) in his development of the Affective Work Competencies Inventory and reported by Petty and others (Petty, Kazanas, & Eastman, 1981). The OWEI was constructed to provide a concise, but accurate measure of work ethic endorsement of workers (Petty, 1993).

The OWEI is comprised of 50 items and used the stem of "As a worker I can describe myself as:" followed by the anchored scale for rating each item: 1=never; 2=almost never; 3=seldom; 4=sometimes; 5=usually; 6=almost always; and 7=always. The instrument is brief and easy to understand with no training required for

administration of the inventory. Petty (1993) established reliability of the instrument by using a panel of experts to select the list of items to be included in the instrument. The instrument was pilot tested with administration to 152 subjects. An overall alpha reliability for the instrument was calculated and found to be .94 in the pilot test (Petty, 1993). Other studies have also found the instrument to be extremely reliable (Hatcher, 1995), (Hill, 1996), (Petty & Hill, 1994), (Petty, 1995a).

The overall correlation alpha for the instrument has ranged from .90 (Hatcher, 1995) to .95 (Hill, 1996). Content validity for the OWEI was established through the use of information gained from prior research and through the panel of experts in its construction (Hill, 1997). The panel recommended additions and modifications of items and 50 items were retained, using the sub-scales entitled interpersonal skills, initiative, and being dependable (Petty, 1995).

Approval to Conduct the Study

Appropriate approvals were necessary for conducting the proposed study. Sources of these approvals included the following:

1. Approved exemption form from Institutional Oversight from the LSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). See Appendix A.
2. The Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects in Research of Northwestern State University. See Appendix B.
3. The Deans of each of the seven colleges in the university. See Appendix C.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, which is located in Northwest Louisiana. The target population for the study was college seniors. The accessible population consisted of all seniors at Northwestern State University who applied for graduation at the beginning of one semester. The sample was those 274 seniors who chose to complete the instrument.

Procedure

The following steps occurred in the data collection procedure:

1. The researcher personally delivered copies of the OWEI instrument to the Dean's office of each of the seven colleges at Northwestern State University

to maximize cooperation. The researcher met with each Dean's secretary to explain the nature and purpose of the study and answered any questions they had regarding administering the inventory.

2. Upon filing his or her application for graduation with each Dean's secretary, the secretary handed each senior the OWEI and asked the senior to complete the brief survey while in the reception area of the Dean's office. Instructions at the top of the instrument read: For each work ethic descriptor listed below, circle the answer that most accurately describes your standards for that item. There are no right or wrong answers. There also is no time limit, but you should work as rapidly as possible. Please respond to every item on the list. See Appendix F for OWEI instrument.
3. The seniors completed the demographic information regarding gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, age, current employment status and length of employment before proceeding to the inventory. No name was asked for on the survey.
4. The seniors responded to each of the 50 items on the inventory.

5. The seniors returned the completed OWEI to the secretary who placed the completed instrument in a large envelope provided by the researcher.
6. Immediately following the deadline for filing applications for graduation, the researcher personally collected all instruments from each Dean's secretary and began the data analysis procedure.

Data Analysis & Summary

The first research objective was to describe the seniors demographically according to gender, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, age range, current employment status, and length of employment. The researcher described the actual study participants by reporting the following nominal measurements:

1. The total number of seniors who completed the inventory.
2. The number and percentage of female seniors who completed the inventory.
3. The number and percentage of male seniors who completed the inventory.
4. The number and percentage of seniors completing the inventory grouped by ethnicity.

5. The number and percentage of seniors completing the inventory grouped by marital status.
6. The number and percentage of seniors in each category of planned occupations.
7. The number and percentage of seniors in each category of current employment status.

The researcher described the actual study participants by reporting the following ordinal data:

1. Ages of seniors (by ranges)-percentage in each category.
2. Number of children (by categories)-percentage in each category.
3. Length of employment (by categories)-percentage in each category.

The second research objective was to determine perceptions of college seniors regarding their own work ethic. The sub-scale scores were calculated by entering each response from each subject electronically using the OWEI instrument that is posted on the Work Ethic web site (Hill, 1998). The scores were then calculated by the site, printed by the investigator and attached to each survey. To accomplish this particular objective, the scores on the sub-scales of the OWEI for each respondent were analyzed descriptively.

Objective 3(a) sought to determine if there were significant differences in scores based on gender. An independent samples t-test was used to meet this objective.

Objective 3(b) through 3(h) sought to determine if differences exist in work ethic scores based on ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, age range, current employment status, and length of employment. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure was used to determine if significant differences existed. The independent variables for these analyses were ethnic group, marital status, number of children, age range, planned occupation, current employment status, and length of employment respectively, and the dependent variable was student perception of work ethic as measured by scores on the OWEI. All statistical calculations were performed using SPSS statistical software for personal computers (SPSS® for Windows, version 10.0). Appropriate tables reported the data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

This research study examined the self-assessed perceptions of occupational work ethic among college seniors. The occupational work ethic inventory was distributed to university seniors making application for graduation in the fall semester of 2000. According to a cumulative count received from each secretary of the respective colleges at the university, a total of 354 graduating seniors made application for graduation during the application period in the fall semester, 2000 (personal communication, October 13, 2000). A total of 290 surveys were returned to the investigator, 267 of which were complete and 7 more that had missing data for one or more missing demographic characteristics but were included because all remaining data was provided, resulting in a total of 274. The response rate was 83%.

Instrument reliability for the OWEI for this study was established. An overall Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha measurement for the instrument was found to be $\alpha = .90$. The instrument was found to be reliable for each sub-scale, as well. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

for the Interpersonal Skills sub-scale was calculated at $\alpha = .91$, for the Initiative sub-scale, $\alpha = .90$, and for the Being Dependable sub-scale, $\alpha = .78$. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for reversed items on the instrument was found to be .79.

Data Analysis

The alpha level was set at .05 *a priori*. Findings are presented by objective.

Objective 1

The first objective was to describe graduating seniors on the following demographic characteristics: gender, age, ethnic group, marital status, number of children, planned occupation, current employment status, and length of employment. These variables are summarized using frequencies and percentages.

Gender

The majority (69.3% or 190) of the respondents in the study were female. Eighty-four (30.7%) were male.

Ethnic Group

Of the responding students, the majority (78.4% or 214) indicated they were White. The second largest ethnicity category (17.2% or 47) was Black. Eight of the respondents indicated that their ethnic group was

something other than the options provided for them on the instrument. They were accordingly asked to specify what ethnic group most appropriately described them. However, none of the eight "other" respondents specified an ethnic group, as shown in Table 4.1.

Marital Status

Regarding marital status of the respondents, the majority of the respondents (n=198, 72.5%) reported that they were single. The second largest category consisted of those respondents who indicated that they were married (n= 61, 22.4%), as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1

Ethnicity of Graduating University Seniors Participating in Work Ethic Study

<u>Ethnic Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
White	214	78.4
Black	47	17.2
Other ^a	8	2.9
Hispanic	3	1.1
Oriental	1	.4
Total	273	100.0

Note. 1 student did not respond to the variable ethnic group.

^a Respondents who indicated "other" did not provide an ethnic group as requested.

Table 4.2

Marital Status of Graduating University Seniors
Participating in Work Ethic Study

Marital Status	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Single	198	72.5
Married	61	22.4
Divorced or Separated	14	5.1
Widowed	0	0.0
Total	273	100.0

Note. 1 student did not respond to the variable marital status.

Number of Children

With reference to number of children, the majority (n= 216,79.1%) of the respondents reported that they had no children, while 49 (18%) had 1-2 children and 8 (2.9%) had 3-4 children, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Number of Children of Graduating University Seniors
Participating in Work Ethic Study

Number of Children	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
No Children	216	79.1
1-2 Children	49	18.0

(Table continued)

Number of Children	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
3-4 Children	8	2.9
5 or more Children	0	0.0
Total	273	100.0

Note. 1 student did not respond to the variable number of children.

Planned Occupation

Regarding the planned occupation of those responding to the survey, the category selected most often (n= 120, 44.8%) was professional and the second most frequently reported occupation was medical (n= 95, 35.4%), as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Planned Occupation Choices of Graduating University Seniors Participating in Work Ethic Study

Planned Occupation	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Professional	120	44.8
Medical	95	35.4
Business	42	15.7
Service	8	3.0
Sales	2	.7
Full time Homemaker	1	.4
Total	268	100.0

Note. 6 students did not respond to the variable planned occupation.

Age

Table 4.5 presents the age groups reported by the respondents. The majority of those students participating in the study (74% or 202) indicated that they were age 24 or under. No students were in the 65 or over age group.

Table 4.5

Age Groups of Graduating University Seniors Participating in Work Ethic Study

Age Groups	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Age 24 or under	202	74.0
Age 25-44	66	24.2
Age 45-64	5	1.8
Age 65 or over	0	0.0
Total	273	100.0

Note. 1 student did not respond to the variable age groups.

Employment Status

Current employment status of the respondents is reported in Table 4.6. The category with the largest number of respondents (47.1% or 129) was those who indicated they were not employed. The category with the

next largest number of respondents (19.3% or 53) was "Employed more than 20 hours per week."

Table 4.6

Current Employment Status of Graduating University Seniors in Work Ethic Study

Employment Status	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Not employed	129	47.1
Employed 1-10 hours per week	41	15.0
Employed 11-20 hours per week	51	18.6
Employed more than 20 hours per week	53	19.3
Total	274	100.0

Length of Employment

Students who indicated that they were employed were asked to report the length of time they had been employed. Thirty-one percent (n=45) of the university seniors in the study reported that they had been employed less than one year. The next largest percentage, (28.3% or 41) reported that they had been employed 1-2 years. The percentage of students reporting that they had been employed more than 4 years was 21.4% or 31, as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Length of Employment of Those Graduating Seniors
Reporting Employment in Work Ethic Study

Length of Employment	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than 1 year	45	31.0
1-2 years	41	28.3
3-4 years	28	19.3
More than 4 years	31	21.4
Total	145	100.0
<u>Note.</u> 129 students were not employed.		

Objective 2

The second objective sought to determine the perceptions of college seniors regarding their own work ethic as measured by their scores on the OWEI.

Individual total scores for each subscale on the OWEI for all 274 respondents are summarized in Appendix G.

Summary totals for subscale scores from the respondents are reported in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Group Descriptive Statistics for Interpersonal,
Initiative, and Dependability Sub-scale Scores

Subscale Scores	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal	4.44	7.00	6.20	.50

(Table continued)

Subscale Scores	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Initiative	4.56	7.00	6.03	.54
Dependable	5.00	7.00	6.34	.48

Note. N=274

To gain a clearer understanding of how to interpret these scores, it is helpful to compare the scores in this study with others who have completed the OWEI. This investigation found that mean scores for university students were higher values than the working adults' scores found in a study done by Hill (1998). Hill reported results from a representative sample of 1,133 working adults in a random sample of 158 different businesses and industries. Hill further separated results using the variable, gender. Therefore, for comparison purposes, the researcher chose to show results by gender, as well. Female graduating seniors' mean scores were Interpersonal=6.22, Initiative=6.04, and Being Dependable=6.38. Male graduating seniors' mean scores were Interpersonal=6.16, Initiative=6.01, and Being Dependable=6.26. Female working adults' mean scores were Interpersonal=6.00, Initiative=5.67, and Being Dependable=6.34. Male working adults' mean scores

were Interpersonal=5.75, Initiative=5.52, and Being Dependable=6.07, as presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

OWEI Mean Scores of Graduating University Seniors by Gender When Compared to OWEI Mean Scores of 1,133 Working Adults in Business & Industry

Sub-scale	Univ.		WA	
	F.	M.	F.	M.
Interpersonal	6.22	6.16	6.00	5.75
Initiative	6.04	6.01	5.67	5.52
Dependable	6.38	6.26	6.34	6.07

Note. F. =female
M. =male
Univ.=University Students
WA= Working Adults

Objective 3

Objective 3(a)

Objective 3(a) sought to determine if differences existed in work ethic perceptions based on gender. To address this objective, an independent samples t-test was used to analyze the data.

Before performing the t-test, Levene's Test for the Equality of Variances was used to determine which form of t-test to use. There was no evidence to suggest that

any of the variances differed. Therefore, the researcher was able to use the t-test calculated with equal variances assumed, as reported in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance Regarding Gender

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		
	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Interpersonal	.335	.563
Initiative	.424	.515
Dependable	.108	.743

Data results from the Independent Samples t-test revealed no significant differences by gender regarding work ethic of college seniors, as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Independent Samples T-Test for Differences in Scores
Based on Gender

Gender		<u>n</u>	M	SD	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Interpersonal	Female	190	6.22	.49	.98	.33
	Male	84	6.16	.52		
Initiative	Female	190	6.04	.53	.50	.62
	Male	84	6.01	.56		
Dependable	Female	190	6.38	.48	1.89	.06
	Male	84	6.26	.49		

Objective 3 (b)

Objective 3 (b) sought to determine if differences existed in occupational work ethic perceptions by ethnicity. The categories were coded as follows: Black=1, White=2, Hispanic=3, and Oriental and Other (combined)=4. These two categories were combined due to the small number of respondents in each category. On the Interpersonal Sub-scale scores, Blacks in the study had a mean value of 6.35 (SD=.50), Whites in the study had a mean value of 6.18 (SD=.49), Hispanics in the study had a mean value of 5.88 (SD=.76) and the Other category had a mean value of 6.11 (SD=.54). When these Interpersonal sub-scale scores were compared statistically using a one-way analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among the different ethnic groups ($F_{3,269} = 2.09, p = .10$), as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Ethnicity

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	3	1.55	2.09	0.10
Within Groups	269	66.49		
Total	272	68.04		

The OWEI Initiative sub-scale scores produced the following means by ethnicity. Blacks in the study had a mean value of 6.09 (SD=.55), Whites in the study had a mean value of 6.03 (SD=.5.3), Hispanics had a mean value of 5.77 (SD=.66), and the Other category had a mean value of 5.80 (SD=.73). When these Initiative sub-scale scores were compared using analysis of variance, no significant differences were found among the different ethnic groups ($F_{3,269} = .97, p = .41$), as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Ethnicity

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Initiative				
Between Groups	3	0.84	0.97	0.41
Within Groups	269	77.84		
Total	272	78.68		

On the Dependable sub-scale scores by ethnicity, Blacks in the study had a mean value of 6.26 (SD=.47), Whites in the study had a mean value of 6.36 (SD=.49), Hispanics in the study has a mean value of 5.77 (SD=.65), and those in the Other category had a mean

value of 6.30 (SD=.58). When these Dependable sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedures, no significant differences were found by ethnicity ($F_{3,269} = .32, p = .81$), as shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Ethnicity

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Dependable				
Between Groups	3	0.23	0.32	0.81
Within Groups	269	64.06		
Total	272	64.29		

Objective 3 (c)

The purpose of objective 3 (c) was to determine if differences existed in perceptions of occupational work ethic using scores on the sub-scales of the OWEI, on the variable, marital status. The categories were coded as: Single=1, Married=2, Divorced or Separated=3. No respondents reported being widowed. Relative to the Interpersonal sub-scale scores, those individuals who indicated they were single had a mean value of 6.21 (SD=.51), those respondents who indicated they married

had a mean value of 6.15 (SD=.49) and those respondents who indicated they were divorced or separated had a mean value of 6.30 (SD=.50). A one-way analysis of variance of the Interpersonal sub-scale scores was conducted to analyze the data. The results showed no significant difference in means based on the variable, marital status ($F_{2,270} = .54, p = .59$), as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Marital Status

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	2	0.27	0.54	0.59
Within Groups	270	67.78		
Total	272	68.05		

On the Initiative sub-scale scores by marital status, those individuals who indicated they were single had a mean value of 6.02 (SD=.55), those respondents who indicated they married had a mean value of 6.01 (SD=.51) and those respondents who indicated they were divorced or separated had a mean value of 6.29 (SD=.45). A one-

way analysis of variance of the Initiative sub-scale scores was conducted to analyze the data. The results showed no significant difference in means based on the variable, marital status ($F_{2,270} = 1.72, p = .18$), as shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Marital Status

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Initiative				
Between Groups	2	0.99	1.72	0.18
Within Groups	270	77.69		
Total	272	78.68		

On the Dependable sub-scale scores by marital status, those individuals who indicated they were single had a mean value of 6.35 ($SD = .49$). Those respondents who indicated they married had a mean value of 6.28 ($SD = .49$) and those respondents who indicated they were divorced or separated had a mean value of 6.55 ($SD = .40$). A one-way analysis of variance of the Dependable sub-scale scores was conducted to analyze the data. The results showed no significant difference in means based on the variable, marital status ($F_{2,270} = 1.79, p = .17$), as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Marital Status

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Dependable				
Between Groups	2	0.84	1.79	0.17
Within Groups	270	63.44		
Total	272	64.28		

Objective 3 (d)

The variable, number of children, was involved in objective 3 (d). This objective sought to determine if differences existed in OWEI scores by number of children of the study participants. Categories of number of children were coded as: No Children=0, 1-2 Children=1, 3-4 Children=3, and 5 or more children=5. However, no one in the study reported having 5 or more children.

On the Interpersonal sub-scale scores by number of children, those respondents who indicated they had no children had a mean value of 6.20 (SD=.50). Individuals who reported having 1-2 children had a mean value of 6.19 (SD= .51) and those participants who indicated they had 3-4 children had a mean value of 6.08 (SD=.46). When these Interpersonal sub-scale scores were compared

statistically using the one-way analysis of variance statistical procedure, no significant differences were found based on the variable, number of children ($F_{2,270} = .27, p = .77$), as shown in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Number of Children

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	2	0.14	0.27	0.77
Within Groups	270	67.91		
Total	272	68.05		

Relative to the Initiative sub-scale scores by number of children, those respondents who indicated they had no children had a mean value of 6.03 ($SD = .54$). Individuals who reported having 1-2 children had a mean value of 6.04 ($SD = .52$) and those participants who indicated they had 3-4 children had a mean value of 6.10 ($SD = .57$). When these Initiative sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the one-way analysis of variance statistical procedure, no significant

differences were found based on the variable, number of children ($F_{2,270} = .82, p = .92$), as shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Number of Children

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Initiative				
Between Groups	2	4.76E-02	0.82	0.92
Within Groups	270	78.63		
Total	272	78.68		

With reference to the Dependable sub-scale scores by number of children, those respondents who indicated they had no children had a mean value of 6.34 (SD=.49). Individuals who reported having 1-2 children had a mean value of 6.38 (SD= .48) and those participants who indicated they had 3-4 children had a mean value of 6.22 (SD=.58). When these Dependable sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance statistical procedure, no significant differences were found based on the variable, number of children ($F_{2,270} = .40, p = .67$), as shown in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Number of Children

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Dependable				
Between Groups	2	0.19	0.40	0.67
Within Groups	270	64.10		
Total	272	64.29		

Objective 3 (e)

Objective 3 (e) sought to determine if differences existed in work ethic scores based on age range. The age categories were coded as: age 24 or below=24, age 25-44=25, age 45-64=45, and age 65 or above=65. No one in the study was in the 65 or above category.

On the Interpersonal sub-scale, those individuals who indicated they were age 24 or below had a mean value of 6.22 (SD=.49). Those participants who indicated they were age 25-44 had a mean value of 6.15 (SD=.54) and those respondents who indicated they were age 45-64 had a mean value of 6.12 (SD=.48). A one-way analysis of variance statistical procedure was used to compare these Interpersonal sub-scale scores. Results showed no

significant differences among the age ranges ($F_{2,270} = .62, p = .54$), as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Age

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	2	0.31	0.62	0.54
Within Groups	270	67.74		
Total	272	68.05		

Relative to the Initiative sub-scale, those individuals who indicated they were age 24 or below had a mean value of 6.03 (SD=.55). Those participants who indicated they were age 25-44 had a mean value of 6.06 (SD=.52) and those respondents who indicated they were age 45-64 had a mean value of 5.87 (SD=.44). A one-way analysis of variance statistical procedure was used to compare these Initiative sub-scale scores. Results showed no significant differences among the age ranges ($F_{2,270} = .32, p = .73$), as shown in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Age

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Initiative				
Between Groups	2	0.19	0.32	0.73
Within Groups	270	78.49		
Total	272	78.68		

On the Dependable sub-scale, those individuals in the study who indicated they were age 24 or below had a mean value of 6.34 (SD=.48). Those participants in the study who indicated they were age 25-44 had a mean value of 6.34 (SD=.52) and those respondents who indicated they were age 45-64 had a mean value of 6.49 (SD=.37). A one-way analysis of variance statistical procedure was used to compare work ethic perceptions based on these Dependable sub-scale mean scores. Results showed no significant differences in means among the age ranges ($F_{2,270} = .22, p = .80$), as shown in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Age

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Dependable				
Between Groups	2	0.11	0.22	0.80
Within Groups	270	64.18		
Total	272	64.29		

Objective 3 (f)

The purpose of objective 3 (f) was to determine if differences existed by OWEI scores based on the variable, planned occupation. The occupations were coded in the following manner: Service=1, Sales=2, Business=3, Professional=4, Medical=5, and full-time Homemaker=6.

On the Interpersonal sub-scale scores, the respondents who chose Service as their planned occupation had a mean value of 6.24 (SD=.46). The individuals who chose Sales had a mean value of 6.19 (SD=.62), and those participants who chose Business had a mean value of 6.18 (SD=.49). Respondents who chose

Professional had a mean value of 6.21 (SD=.57), those participants who chose Medical had a mean value of 6.21 (SD=.53) and the one individual who chose full-time Homemaker had a value of 6.31. When these Interpersonal sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among the different planned occupations ($F_{5,262} = .05$, $p=1.00$), as shown in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Planned Occupation

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	5	6.136E-02	0.05	1.00
Within Groups	262	67.27		
Total	267	67.33		

Relative to the Initiative sub-scale scores, the respondents who chose Service as their planned

occupation had a mean value of 5.96 (SD=.46). The individuals who chose Sales had a mean value of 6.13 (SD=.53), and those participants who chose Business had a mean value of 6.00 (SD=.53). Respondents who chose Professional had a mean value of 6.02 (SD=.57), those participants who chose Medical had a mean value of 6.06 (SD=.53) and the one individual who chose full-time Homemaker had a value of 6.69. When these Initiative sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among the different planned occupations ($F_{5,262} = .40$, $p = .85$), as shown in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Planned Occupation

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Initiative				
Between Groups	5	0.60	0.40	0.85
Within Groups	262	77.50		
Total	267	78.10		

On the Dependable sub-scale scores, the respondents who chose Service as their planned occupation had a mean

value of 6.46 (SD=.48). The individuals who chose Sales had a mean value of 6.50 (SD=.30), and those participants who chose Business had a mean value of 6.36 (SD=.46). Respondents who chose Professional had a mean value of 6.32 (SD=.51), those participants who chose Medical had a mean value of 6.36 (SD=.48) and the one individual who chose full-time Homemaker had a value of 6.29. When these Dependable sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among the different planned occupations ($F_{5,262} = .32, p = .96$), as shown in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Planned Occupation

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Dependable				
Between Groups	5	0.24	0.32	0.96
Within Groups	262	62.26		
Total	267	62.50		

Objective 3 (g)

The purpose of objective 3 (g) was to determine if differences existed in OWEI scores by current employment status. The employment status was coded as: not employed=0, employed 1-10 hours per week=1, employed 11-20 hours per week=11, and employed more than 20 hours per week=20.

On the Interpersonal subscale scores, those participants in the study who reported they were not employed had a mean value of 6.25 (SD=.48). Those individuals in the study who indicated they were employed 1-10 hours per week had a mean value of 6.11 (SD=.50). Participants in the study who indicated they were employed 11-20 hours per week had a mean value of 6.15 (SD=.52) and those respondents in the study who indicated they were employed more than 20 hours per week had a mean value of 6.23 (SD=.53). When these Interpersonal sub-scale mean scores were compared statistically using the one-way analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among those respondents in the study, based on the variable, different employment status ($F_{3,270} = 1.05, p = .37$), as shown in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Current Employment Status

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	3	0.80	1.05	0.37
Within Groups	270	67.88		
Total	273	68.68		

On the Initiative subscale scores, those participants in the study who reported they were not employed had a mean value of 6.04 (SD=.55). Those individuals who indicated they were employed 1-10 hours per week had a mean value of 5.88 (SD=.53). Participants who indicated they were employed 11-20 hours per week had a mean value of 6.04 (SD=.52) and those respondents who indicated they were employed more than 20 hours per week had a mean value of 6.15 (SD=.51). When these Initiative sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among those with differing employment status ($F_{3,270} = 2.05$, $p = .11$), as shown in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Current Employment Status

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Initiative				
Between Groups	3	1.78	2.05	0.11
Within Groups	270	77.84		
Total	273	79.62		

With reference to the Dependable sub-scale scores, those participants in the study who reported they were not employed had a mean value of 6.40 (SD=.45). Those individuals who indicated they were employed 1-10 hours per week had a mean value of 6.20 (SD=.52).

Participants who indicated they were employed 11-20 hours per week had a mean value of 6.31 (SD=.52) and those respondents who indicated they were employed more than 20 hours per week had a mean value of 6.35

(SD=.51). When these Dependable sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among those participants with different employment status ($F_{3,270} = 1.77, p=.15$), as shown in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Current Employment Status

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Dependable				
Between Groups	3	1.25	1.77	0.15
Within Groups	270	63.47		
Total	272	64.72		

Objective 3 (h)

The final objective sought to determine if differences existed in occupational work ethic perceptions in the OWEI scores by length of employment. The categories were coded as: employed less than 1 year=1, employed 1-2 years=2, employed 3-4 years=3, and employed more than 4 years=4.

On the Interpersonal subscale scores, those participants in the study who reported they had been employed less than one year had a mean value of 6.22 (SD=.51). Those individuals who indicated they had been employed 1-2 years had a mean value of 6.14 (SD=.53). Participants who indicated they had been employed 3-4

years had a mean value of 6.12 (SD=.62) and those respondents who indicated they were employed more than 4 years had a mean value of 6.17 (SD=.42). When these Interpersonal sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among those with different lengths of employment ($F_{3,141} = .29$, $p = .84$), as shown in Table 4.30.

Table 4.30

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Interpersonal Sub-scale Scores by Length of Employment

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Interpersonal				
Between Groups	3	0.23	0.29	0.84
Within Groups	141	38.37		
Total	144	38.60		

Regarding the Initiative subscale scores, those participants in the study who reported they had been employed less than one year had a mean value of 6.01 (SD=.51). Those individuals who indicated they had been employed 1-2 years had a mean value of 5.99 (SD=.59).

Participants who indicated they had been employed 3-4 years had a mean value of 6.08 (SD=.63) and those respondents who indicated they were employed more than 4 years had a mean value of 6.08 (SD=.41). When these Initiative sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among those participants with different lengths of employment ($F_{3,141} = .28, p = .84$), as shown in Table 4.30.

Table 4.31

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Initiative Sub-scale Scores by Length of Employment

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Initiative				
Between Groups	3	0.24	0.28	0.84
Within Groups	141	40.07		
Total	144	40.31		

On the Dependable sub-scale scores, those participants in the study who reported they had been employed less than one year had a mean value of 6.29 (SD=.53). Those individuals who indicated they had been employed 1-2 years had a mean value of 6.31 (SD=.49).

Participants who indicated they had been employed 3-4 years had a mean value of 6.30 (SD=.63) and those respondents who indicated they were employed more than 4 years had a mean value of 6.30 (SD=.44). When these Dependable sub-scale scores were compared statistically using the analysis of variance procedure, no significant differences were found among those participants with different lengths of employment ($F_{3,141} = .02, p=1.00$), as shown in Table 4.32.

Table 4.32

Analysis of Variance of the OWEI Dependable Sub-scale Scores by Length of Employment

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Dependable				
Between Groups	3	1.588E-02	0.02	1.00
Within Groups	141	38.56		
Total	144	38.57		

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research was designed to determine perceptions of work ethic among college seniors based on their self-assessed scores on the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory and to further determine if differences existed among those seniors' scores based on a number of independent variables. Specifically, the study was done to address the following objectives:

1. Describe university seniors demographically according to gender, ethnic group, marital status, and number of children, planned occupation, age range, current employment status, and length of employment.
2. Determine perceptions of college seniors at one university regarding their own occupational work ethic as measured by the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory [®] (OWEI) (Petty, 1993). This instrument is a measure of one's self-expressed work habits, attitudes and values. The 50 items or descriptors contained in the inventory represent essential work ethic concepts and attitudes developed from previous research by Hatcher (1995), Petty and Hill (1994), and Petty (1995a).

3. Determine if differences exist in occupational work ethic perceptions on the OWEI based on the following selected demographic variables:

- a. gender
- b. ethnicity
- c. marital status
- d. number of children
- e. planned occupation
- f. age
- g. current employment status
- h. length of employment

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at one open admissions, state university located in Northwest Louisiana, with an enrollment of approximately 9,000 students. The population for the study was all seniors at the university who applied for graduation by the graduation application deadline in the fall semester, 2000, and the sample consisted of those seniors who completed the instrument.

Instrument, Data Collection and Analysis

The Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI) (Petty, 1993) was the instrument used in the study. This anchored-scale survey requires that individuals respond

to 50 items and then are scored on three separate subscales-Interpersonal Skills, Initiative, and Being Dependable.

Seniors making application for graduation in one semester voluntarily chose to complete the survey. A total of 274 seniors responded by completing the instrument.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics appropriate for describing the subjects with regard to each of the independent variables specified in the objectives. An independent samples t-test was utilized to address objective 3, which sought to determine differences in scores by gender. An independent samples t-test is used to establish whether there are differences between the sample means of two independent sets of interval scores. A one-way analysis of variance was used for each of the remainder of the objectives. ANOVA tests the overall hypothesis of difference among more than two groups.

Discussion

The first objective was to describe seniors using a number of demographic characteristics. In describing the particular characteristics of those responding to the study, it was interesting to note that 26% of seniors

were age 25 or over, highlighting the increasing percentage of non-traditional students enrolled in universities. Additionally, 52.9% of those seniors were currently employed at least part-time while attending college and of that percentage, 19.3% were employed 20 or more hours per week, suggesting a strong attitude toward work. Further, this finding emphasizes the changing face of today's university clientele, enforcing the fact that many college students today work extensively while simultaneously attending institutions of higher learning.

The second objective was to determine the perceptions of college seniors regarding their own work ethic. Those scores are listed in Appendix G. In comparing mean scores from this study with results from a representative sample of 1,133 working adults of 158 different businesses reported earlier by Hill (1997) it was revealed that the respondents' mean scores from the university study were higher on every subscale. These comparative statistics suggest that the work ethic perceptions of college seniors in this study appear to be stronger in both males and females than those working adults out in business and industry.

Objective 3 (a) sought to determine if significant differences existed in work ethic perception scores relative to gender. Although females' mean scores on each of the subscales was slightly higher than males, none had a significant p value. Other studies have found significant differences in at least one subscale score, but no significant differences were found in this particular investigation.

The purpose of objectives 3 (b), 3 (c), and 3 (d) was to determine if there were any significant differences by ethnic background, marital status, and number of children presented from the data analyzed in this study. None were found in regard to any of the sub-scale scores.

The purpose of objective 3 (e) was to ascertain if differences existed in work ethic perceptions based on planned occupation. No significant differences occurred based on the variable, planned occupation. Since several of the categories were related, such as business, professional, and sales, nearly 80% of the respondents chose one of those categories and had similar scores on each of the subscales.

Objective 3 (f) related to age group. The purpose of this particular objective was to determine if

differences existed in work ethic perceptions by different age groups. It has been reported that Baby Boomers and Generation X'ers' attitudes toward work differ significantly. An examination of work ethic perceptions by age range in this study did not support a theory that older individuals have a stronger work ethic than young people do.

The goal of objectives 3 (g) and 3 (h) was to determine if there were any differences among work ethic perceptions of seniors based on current employment status and length of employment, respectively. No meaningful differences in work ethic perceptions on either of these factors were found to exist in this research study.

Limitations

Inferences from this study are limited to the specific population in one geographic region of the state of Louisiana. A study of work ethic and work attitudes among other university seniors in other regions of the country would be needed to generalize to all university seniors in this country. Data gathering was limited to those seniors at one open-admissions state university, making application for graduation during one semester.

The research presented was conducted and the results prepared by one investigator. However, others' expert opinions and suggestions were sought concerning data collection, analyses, interpretation, and presentation.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine seniors' self-perceptions of work ethic, based on their scores on the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory and to further determine if differences in perception existed based on the eight attribute variables.

The researcher concluded, based on graduating seniors' mean scores on the OWEI, that the students in this study had a strong, positive perception of their own work ethic. Further, the quantitative data from mean scores on the OWEI in this investigation showed that college seniors' scores were higher than working adults in business and industry, prompting recommendations for future research.

The researcher also concluded that based on findings in this study, there were no significant differences in perceptions of work ethic with regard to gender, ethnicity, marital status, number of children,

planned occupation, age, current employment status, and length of employment.

Much of the review of literature focused on gender differences in work ethic. The review of literature had shown that several studies had found differences, especially in regard to gender, ethnicity, and age. The other variables examined were exploratory in nature and were included in the objectives to determine if differences existed based on these exploratory variables. This research study found no significant differences in perceptions of work ethic relative to any of the eight factors that were examined.

This research concludes that graduating seniors at one rural State University have a favorable self-perception of their occupational work ethic. It also helps to dispel the notion of stereotypical negative character traits that have been attributed to today's young people. Jurkiewicz (2000) indicated that a generation ago, these same type character traits were attributed to the young Boomers. History may be merely repeating itself regarding the work ethic, as it does in many other life areas. It is refreshing to see that university seniors, in general, perceive their individual work ethic as a positive one. It is hoped

that this study will provide valuable information to the academic and business communities.

Results from this study should strengthen university faculty and administrators' confidence that graduates are leaving college armed with a strong attitude toward work. Further, business and industry should be pleased that employees they hire right out of college really do know the meaning of a day's work for a day's pay.

Recommendations

Considering the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The researcher recommends that future studies examine differences in work ethic perceptions based on a broader range of occupational choices. A greater variety in occupations may reveal differences in work ethic perceptions by occupations.
2. The researcher recommends that this study be replicated as a longitudinal study to investigate if work ethic attitudes change over time and with work experience as one goes from the college environment into the workforce.

3. Additional research should look at variables in the workplace environment to determine if there are significant factors existing in the workplace that may affect attitudes toward work.
4. Future studies should look at the similarities as opposed to difference among workers of different ages.
5. The investigator recommends that future research expand this study to include universities in other parts of the country to determine if similar results occur.
6. It is recommended that this study be replicated using other statistical tests such as multiple regression analysis or multiple analysis of variance to determine if findings would be different from those found in this particular study.
7. Future studies should investigate the attitudes toward work of college freshmen as compared with those work attitudes of graduating seniors to determine if self-perceptions of work ethic become more favorable with maturity and experience.

Further study, based on these recommendations, would add to the existing body of knowledge and assist trainers in business and industry as well as administrators and program planners in higher education. These individuals are responsible for training workers and designing curricula that promote a strong work ethic. This study has added to the existing body of knowledge regarding work ethic perceptions and has sought to reinforce the importance of developing, promoting, and sustaining a workforce that has strong values and attitudes regarding personal work ethic in American society.

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APPENDIX A

LSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT PROTECTION EXEMPTION APPROVAL FORM

HSSC accession #: _____

LSU Proposal #: _____

LSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) 388-8692; FAX 6792
HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT PROTECTION Office: 117B David Boyd Hall

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT

Unless they are formally qualified as meeting the criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved in advance by the LSU IRB. This form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

NOTE: Even when exempted, the researcher is required to exercise prudence in protecting the interests of research subjects, obtain informed consent if appropriate, and must conform to the Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects (Belmont Report), 45 CFR 46, and LSU Guide to Informed Consent; (Available from OSR or <http://www.osr.lsu.edu/irb>)

Instructions: Complete checklist, pp 2-4; if exemption appears likely, see instructions, p.4. If not, submit IRB application.**

Principal Investigator Patricia N. Pierson Student? Y/N
Ph: 318-357-5588 mailppiers1@lsu.edu Dept/Unit Vocational Education

If Student, name supervising professor Dr. Gari Holmes Ph: 388-2464
Student Mailing Address: 1912 Nolley Rd., Natchitoches, LA Ph: 318-352-2204

Project Title Perceptions of Work Ethic Among College Seniors

Agency expected to fund project n/a

Subject pool (e.g. Psychology Students) Seniors at Northwestern State Univ. of LA.

Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted.

PI Signature Patricia N. Pierson Date 8/23/00 (no per signatures)

Screening Committee Action: Exempted ✓ Not Exempted _____

Reviewer: Michael Keener Signature Michael Keener Date 9-5-00

Comments Student should give con to LSU-IRB!
cc PI (signed face page only); Dr. C. Graham (application with protocol) 117B David Boyd Hall, LSU.

Help available from Dr. Charles Graham, 388-8692 cgraham@lsu.edu or any screening committee member.

*Change to
Dr. Matthews
on consent
form. See also
Dr. Graham*

APPENDIX B

NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
IN RESEARCH
APPROVAL


NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

TO:

Patricia Pierson
Family and Consumer Sciences
Northwestern State University
Natchitoches, LA 71497

DATE: July 28, 2000

FROM:


Neelam Kher, Ph.D., Temporary Chair
Committee on Protection of Human Subjects in Research

Your revisions to your application to the Committee on Protection of Human Subjects in Research for review of the methods and procedures to be utilized in the study titled:
Perceptions of Work Ethic Among College Seniors

for protecting the rights and welfare of study subjects have been reviewed and your application was approved.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE DEAN'S APPROVAL FORM

MEMORANDUM

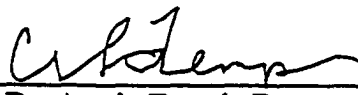
TO: Dr. Austin Temple, Dean
College of Science & Technology

FROM: Patricia N. Pierson
Department of Family & Consumer Sciences

RE: Proposed Research Study

This is to request that you approve the use of seniors in the College of Science & Technology in my proposed research study "Perceptions of Work Ethic among College Seniors". Seniors making application for graduation in the fall semester, 2000 will be asked to voluntarily complete a brief survey. Anonymity will be assured as data will be released in summary form only and students' privacy will in no way be jeopardized. Once approved by your office and the Human Subjects in Research Review Committee, I will be delivering the survey instrument to your secretary.

I hope to be able to share my findings with the Office of Institutional Research and University Planning and Assessment. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 5587 or e-mail me at pierson_p@alpha.nsula.edu. Your cooperation is most appreciated.

Approved:  Date: 7-5-00
Dr. Austin Temple Dean
College of Science & Technology

APPENDIX D

REQUEST TO USE OWEI IN RESEARCH STUDY

PINE 3.91 MESSAGE TEXT

Folder: MAIL Message 249 of 249 ALL 44

Date: Wed, 10 Mar 1999 10:34:38 CST
From: PIERSON_P@ALPHA.NSULA.EDU
To: "PETTY@UTKUX.UTCC.UTK.EDU"@ALPHA.NSULA.EDU
Cc: PIERSON_P@ALPHA.NSULA.EDU
Subject: Possibility of Using your instrument

Dear Dr. Petty,

I am a Ph.D. student in the School of Vocational Education at LSU. My research interest deals with the perceptions of work ethic in college seniors and doing gender comparisons as suggested by your and Dr. Hill's research. I would like permission to use your OWEI instrument in my study. Will you let me know as soon as possible if you will allow this? I would greatly appreciate your help with this. I am excited about this opportunity and have loved reading your research. Thanks so much, Pat Pierson
e-mail: pierson_p@alpha.nsula.edu

[Already at end of message]
? Help M Main Menu P PrevMsg - PrevPage D Delete R Reply
O OTHER CMDS V ViewAtch N NextMsg Spc NextPage U Undelete F Forward

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION TO USE OWEI IN RESEARCH STUDY

PINE 3.91 MESSAGE TEXT Folder: MAIL Message 224 of 224 481 ANS 45
Date: Fri, 26 Mar 1999 16:00:44 -0500
From: Greg Petty <gpetty@utk.edu>
To: PIERSON_P@ALPHA.NSULA.EDU
Subject: Re: Permission to use the OWEI in my study

Dear Pat,

Yes, you may have permission to use the OWEI in you dissertation study. I only ask that you share your results with me so I may add them to my data base that can be shared with other researchers interested in the work ethic.

Sincerely,

PIERSON_P@ALPHA.NSULA.EDU wrote:

> Dear Dr. Petty,

? Help	M Main Menu	P PrevMsg	- PrevPage	D Delete	R Reply
O OTHER CMDS	V ViewAtch	N NextMsg	Spc NextPage	U Undelete	F Forward

APPENDIX F

OCCUPATIONAL WORK ETHIC INVENTORY (OWEI)

©1993 Gregory C. Petty

Please circle the correct response:

Gender:

1. Male
2. Female

Ethnic Group:

1. Black
2. Hispanic
3. White
4. Oriental
5. Other _____

Marital Status:

1. Married
2. Single
3. Divorced or Separated
4. Widowed

Number of Children: 0 1-2 3-4 5 or more

Planned Occupation:

1. Service (service, construction worker, or cashier)
2. Sales (insurance, sales in department store)
3. Business (executive, management)
4. Professional (teacher, lawyer, accountant)
5. Medical Profession (nurse, doctor, dentist)
6. Full-time homemaker

Age: 24 or below 25-44 45-6 65 or above

Current Employment Status:

1. Not Employed
2. Employed 1-10 hours per week
3. Employed 11-20 hours per week
4. Employed more than 20 hours per week

Length of Employment:

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1-2 years
3. 3-4 years
4. More than 4 years

For each work ethic descriptor listed below, circle the number corresponding with the answer that most accurately describes your standards for that item. There are no right or wrong answers. There is also no time limit, but you should work as rapidly as possible. Please respond to every item on the list.

As a worker, I can describe myself as:

	Never	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always	Always	
1. Dependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. Stubborn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. Following regulations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. Following direction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. Ambitious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. Effective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. Tardy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. Initiating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. Perceptive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. Irresponsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. Efficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15. Adaptable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. Careful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17. Appreciative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18. Accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19. Emotionally Stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Never	Almost	Never						
			Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Almost	Always		
20. Conscientious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
21. Depressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
22. Patient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
23. Punctual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
24. Devious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
25. Selfish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
26. Negligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
27. Persevering	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
28. Likeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
29. Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
30. Apathetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
31. Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
32. Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
33. Hard working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
34. Rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
35. Orderly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
36. Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
37. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
38. Persistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
39. Hostile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
40. Dedicated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
41. Devoted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
42. Courteous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
43. Considerate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

	Never	Almost	Never					
	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Almost	Always			
44. Careless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
45. Productive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
46. Well groomed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
47. Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
48. Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
49. Resourceful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
50. Modest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

APPENDIX G

CASE SUMMARIES

Case Summaries of Total Scores on the OWEI by University Seniors Responding to Survey

	Interpersonal	Initiative	Dependable
1	5.81	6.00	6.00
2	6.50	6.50	6.71
3	6.44	5.81	6.71
4	6.50	6.62	6.29
5	6.19	5.62	6.14
6	6.62	6.31	6.86
7	6.44	6.56	6.86
8	5.62	5.50	5.29
9	5.75	6.19	6.43
10	6.62	6.69	6.71
11	5.81	6.06	6.14
12	6.19	6.56	6.43
13	5.31	5.06	5.86
14	5.56	5.69	5.86
15	5.94	5.81	6.14
16	6.38	6.19	5.86
17	5.19	5.88	5.00
18	5.81	5.88	6.00
19	6.00	5.19	5.71
20	6.88	6.75	7.00
21	6.44	6.81	6.86
22	7.00	7.00	7.00
23	5.31	5.75	5.86
24	5.25	5.56	5.71
25	5.94	5.88	6.14
26	6.69	6.19	6.86
27	5.50	5.50	5.86
28	6.06	5.88	5.86
29	6.25	5.81	5.43
30	6.06	5.69	6.14
31	6.12	5.69	6.86
32	5.94	6.00	6.57
33	5.19	5.12	5.71
34	6.62	6.62	7.00
35	6.56	5.94	6.71
36	5.31	5.00	6.43

(Table continued)

37	6.19	6.06	6.00
38	5.88	5.69	6.29
39	6.94	6.62	6.57
40	6.38	5.69	6.14
41	7.00	7.00	7.00
42	6.31	6.00	6.71
43	6.75	6.69	6.86
44	6.19	6.19	5.71
45	6.56	6.12	6.43
46	6.06	5.88	6.29
47	6.62	6.06	6.86
48	4.94	5.62	5.43
49	5.44	5.25	5.71
50	6.00	6.12	5.86
51	6.06	5.94	6.71
52	7.00	7.00	6.86
53	5.38	4.56	6.00
54	6.81	6.81	7.00
55	6.75	6.12	6.86
56	6.50	6.19	6.43
57	6.62	6.38	6.86
58	6.31	6.69	6.29
59	6.88	6.50	6.86
60	6.38	6.69	6.57
61	6.88	6.69	6.86
62	5.00	4.94	5.00
63	5.94	6.00	6.00
64	5.62	5.75	6.43
65	5.44	5.44	5.86
66	6.38	6.69	6.14
67	4.69	5.06	5.14
68	6.25	5.50	6.14
69	6.81	6.31	6.43
70	5.88	5.56	6.00
71	6.50	6.25	6.71
72	5.44	5.25	5.57
73	6.06	6.06	6.57
74	6.12	5.75	6.71
75	6.94	6.94	6.57
76	6.88	6.94	6.86
77	5.94	5.81	6.00
78	5.75	6.06	6.57
79	5.81	6.06	6.00
80	6.25	5.88	6.71
81	5.88	5.88	7.00

(Table continued)

82	5.94	6.00	6.14
83	5.56	6.56	6.00
84	6.00	5.50	6.29
85	6.38	6.81	6.57
86	6.69	6.00	6.14
87	6.69	6.38	6.57
88	5.81	5.56	6.29
89	6.56	5.88	6.43
90	6.12	5.94	6.43
91	6.31	5.44	6.86
92	6.12	6.06	6.57
93	6.38	6.31	6.57
94	5.88	6.06	6.14
95	5.81	5.62	6.00
96	6.56	6.38	6.43
97	4.44	4.81	5.14
98	6.06	6.19	6.29
99	6.06	5.00	5.71
100	7.00	6.38	6.43
101	6.81	6.94	6.86
102	6.62	6.31	7.00
103	5.69	5.56	6.29
104	5.00	5.19	5.57
105	5.81	5.94	6.00
106	6.44	6.12	6.71
107	5.81	6.00	6.57
108	6.56	6.06	6.57
109	6.50	5.94	6.86
110	6.50	5.62	6.71
111	6.94	6.75	6.57
112	5.75	5.75	6.29
113	5.94	5.88	5.71
114	6.25	6.62	6.57
115	7.00	7.00	7.00
116	6.94	7.00	6.86
117	6.69	6.94	6.86
118	5.50	5.38	5.57
119	6.06	5.31	6.14
120	5.75	5.62	5.71
121	6.06	5.62	6.86
122	5.75	5.25	5.86
123	6.50	6.25	7.00
124	6.31	6.19	6.00
125	6.25	5.44	6.57
126	5.94	5.75	6.43

(Table continued)

127	6.62	6.50	6.71
128	6.69	6.44	7.00
129	6.19	5.69	6.57
130	6.88	6.19	6.71
131	5.56	5.75	5.86
132	6.25	6.19	6.71
133	4.94	4.88	5.29
134	6.38	6.25	6.71
135	5.75	5.00	5.57
136	5.69	5.25	6.29
137	6.44	5.62	6.14
138	6.88	6.50	6.71
139	5.81	5.69	5.86
140	6.00	5.38	6.43
141	5.50	5.50	5.00
142	5.88	6.12	6.43
143	6.62	6.25	6.43
144	6.31	6.31	6.29
145	6.25	6.62	6.86
146	4.94	4.81	5.00
147	5.75	6.31	6.43
148	6.25	6.06	6.71
149	5.06	5.00	5.29
150	6.19	5.94	6.86
151	6.38	5.94	6.43
152	6.62	6.50	6.71
153	5.62	5.38	5.86
154	6.24	5.50	6.71
155	6.19	5.81	6.29
156	6.94	6.75	6.86
157	6.75	6.31	6.43
158	5.88	5.69	6.14
159	6.19	6.69	7.00
160	6.75	6.31	6.86
161	6.69	6.81	6.71
162	5.94	5.75	6.00
163	6.25	6.06	6.29
164	6.06	6.25	7.00
165	6.25	6.12	6.57
166	6.56	5.67	6.86
167	5.94	6.06	6.43
168	5.31	5.81	6.14
169	6.19	6.56	6.43
170	5.81	5.75	5.43
171	7.00	6.94	7.00

(Table continued)

172	5.69	5.25	5.43
173	6.12	5.94	6.57
174	5.12	5.12	5.00
175	6.94	7.00	6.86
176	6.06	6.06	6.43
177	5.75	5.25	6.14
178	5.75	5.06	5.57
179	6.69	6.50	7.00
180	6.06	5.94	6.43
181	6.62	5.69	6.29
182	6.56	5.81	6.86
183	6.75	6.12	6.57
184	6.38	6.38	6.43
185	6.75	7.00	6.71
186	6.19	6.31	6.14
187	6.31	6.75	6.00
188	6.31	6.12	6.29
189	6.31	5.88	6.57
190	5.88	5.88	6.00
191	6.62	5.81	6.29
192	6.25	5.88	6.00
193	6.75	6.38	6.43
194	5.75	5.31	5.57
195	6.69	5.38	6.43
196	6.19	6.31	6.43
197	6.31	6.06	6.71
198	6.81	6.44	6.86
199	5.94	5.50	6.14
200	6.69	6.88	7.00
201	6.81	6.94	6.86
202	6.56	6.50	7.00
203	7.00	6.44	7.00
204	6.69	6.38	6.71
205	6.12	5.06	6.43
206	5.88	5.88	5.86
207	6.00	5.94	6.00
208	6.38	6.38	6.43
209	5.75	5.44	6.00
210	6.31	6.50	6.29
211	6.62	6.62	6.57
212	6.00	5.44	6.00
213	6.56	5.50	6.43
214	6.56	6.56	6.71
215	6.44	5.62	6.29
216	5.56	5.81	5.43

(Table continued)

217	5.94	5.88	5.86
218	5.69	5.56	6.14
219	6.19	6.75	6.29
220	6.38	6.69	7.00
221	6.19	6.00	6.00
222	6.00	5.94	6.14
223	6.12	5.25	5.29
224	6.62	6.56	7.00
225	6.25	6.19	6.43
226	6.19	5.88	6.00
227	5.88	5.25	6.57
228	6.19	5.75	6.29
229	5.81	6.06	5.86
230	6.50	6.38	6.71
231	6.44	5.69	6.86
232	4.94	4.81	5.57
233	6.50	6.38	6.57
234	6.31	6.25	6.29
235	5.88	5.75	6.29
236	6.69	6.06	6.86
237	6.38	5.50	5.43
238	7.00	7.00	7.00
239	6.00	6.50	6.57
240	6.81	6.69	6.86
241	6.56	6.38	6.71
242	6.38	5.75	6.57
243	7.00	6.88	6.86
244	6.88	6.19	6.57
245	6.75	6.94	6.57
246	6.69	6.75	6.71
247	6.38	6.06	6.29
248	6.69	6.69	5.57
249	6.12	6.06	5.86
250	7.00	6.94	7.00
251	6.62	6.50	6.71
252	6.12	5.44	6.71
253	6.62	6.50	6.71
254	6.25	6.25	6.86
255	7.00	6.12	6.14
256	5.88	5.88	6.00
257	6.69	6.81	7.00
258	6.44	6.00	6.14
259	6.31	6.25	6.57
260	6.88	6.75	7.00
261	5.31	5.19	5.86

(Table continued)

262		6.50	6.88	6.86
263		6.12	6.38	6.29
264		5.88	6.06	6.00
265		5.81	5.50	6.71
266		5.62	4.94	6.29
267		6.25	6.00	5.86
268		6.00	5.94	6.14
269		6.50	6.50	6.71
270		6.50	6.19	6.57
271		5.44	5.06	5.00
272		6.94	6.56	6.71
273		7.00	7.00	7.00
274		6.25	6.25	6.14
Total	N	274	274	274

VITA

Patricia Nolen Pierson was born on February 13, 1955, in DeRidder, Louisiana. She is the daughter of the late Walter Robert Nolen and Lounette Ford Nolen of Pitkin, Louisiana. She graduated from Pitkin High School in 1973. While in high school she excelled both academically and athletically, winning numerous honors for basketball and was valedictorian of her high school class. She attended Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana, and was one of the first recipients of a collegiate athletic scholarship for women in Louisiana. She earned a bachelor's degree in Home Economics Education in 1977, graduating magna cum laude, and later earned a master's degree in Home Economics in 1980.

After gaining her undergraduate degree, she taught high school Home Economics and coached high school girls' basketball, where her team won the state runner-up title in her first season. In 1978, she became the Head Women's Basketball Coach at Northwestern State University and coached there until 1987, where her teams won three conference championships and she received numerous coaching honors. She then accepted the head women's coaching position at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, and coached there until 1992,

receiving Coach of the Year honors in the Colonial Athletic Association in 1991-92.

In 1992, she and her family moved back to Natchitoches, Louisiana, and she began teaching in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Northwestern. She was named department head in 1993 and currently serves in that position.

Under her leadership new undergraduate programs have been added to the department, including Hospitality Management and Tourism, and Nutrition and Food Systems. The department has also experienced an increase in enrollment and gained national accreditation from the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences in 1997. She serves on numerous university committees and actively recruits for the college.

Her professional activities include active involvement in the Louisiana Association of Family & Consumer Sciences, where she currently serves as Central District President. She is nationally certified in Family & Consumer Sciences. Pierson is active in several civic and community service and educational organizations as well.

Pierson's research interests, in addition to work ethic, include nutrition and fitness, and studies relative to families and children.

She is married to Natchitoches banker, Joseph Hunter Pierson, Jr., and they have one son, Joshua. She also has one stepdaughter, Alicia, and one step-granddaughter, Anna Margaret.

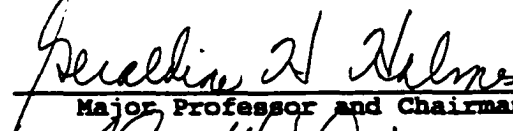
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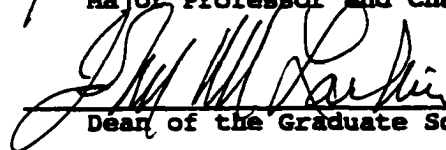
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Major Field: Vocational Education

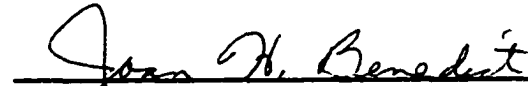
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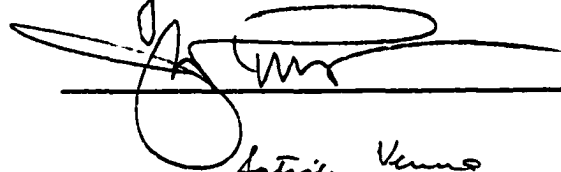
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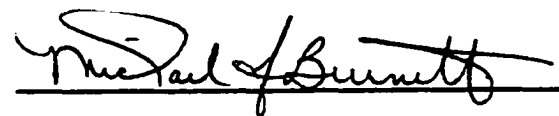

Major Professor and Chairman


Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:







Date of Examination:

March 16, 2001
